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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

UNITED STATES.

REQUEST FOR REPORTS ON DYSENTERY.

Medical officers, acting assistant surgeons of the Marine-Hospital Service, secretaries of State boards of health, and other sanitarians are requested to report as soon as practicable whenever dysentery is prevailing in their respective localities, giving the type of the disease, number of cases (when possible), and mortality. The information is desired for the purpose of scientific investigations which are being made on this subject.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

Tuberculosis among the Indians of southeast Alaska.

PORT TOWNSEND, WASH., July 6, 1901.

SIR: I have the honor to bring before the Bureau the subject of tuberculosis among the natives of southeastern Alaska.

While in Alaska I learned that tuberculosis existed among the natives to quite an extent. While my observations on the subject were very superficial, yet I had a number of cases pointed out to me by the physicians as being of a tubercular nature, obtained histories of hæmoptysis, and saw many cases with symptoms of cough and a very suspicious looking profuse expectoration. Not only is the pulmonary form common, but one sees many cases of tuberculosis affecting the cervical glands and the bones and joints.

The good effect of plenty of fresh air, which the Indians obtain while roaming around in the warmer weather, is rendered valueless by the evil effect of filthy surroundings while housed for the winter. Their houses are very dirty; in fact, I suppose they are not scrubbed out from one year's end to the other. Several families are crowded into one house, and when we consider the fact that many of them expectorate on the floor, the sputum, no doubt, often swarming with tubercle bacilli, it is no wonder that tuberculosis is so prevalent.

It seems to me that this subject, dealing as it does with sanitation and hygiene, the prevention of the spread of a loathsome and contagious disease, would properly come under the jurisdiction of the Marine-Hospital Service, and it would be most interesting to make a scientific study of the disease among the natives of the territory under consideration. I believe that the Government should take this matter in hand, because here is a place where a Government official, clothed with the proper authority, can do a great deal toward educating the Indians in the knowledge of the correct mode of living to secure good health. They no longer cling to all their old superstitions, they will consult a regular physician when one can be obtained, and they are open to instruction, and when such instruction is backed by a little authority they will act accordingly.